Singularity Overview

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Microsoft Research

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MSR Faculty Summit

Microsoft

Large, Diverse Research Team

- Lead by Galen Hunt and Jim Larus
- **MSR Cambridge**
  - Paul Barham, Richard Black, Tim Harris, Rebecca Isaacs, Dushyanth Narayanan
- **MSR Redmond**
  - Advanced Compiler Technology Group:
    - Juan Chen, Qunyan Mangus, Mark Plesko, Bjarne Steensgaard, David Tarditi
  - Foundations of Software Engineering Group:
    - Wolfgang Grieskamp
  - Operating Systems Group:
    - Mark Aiken, Chris Hawblitzel, Orion Hodson, Galen Hunt, Steven Levi
  - Security and Distributed Systems:
    - Dan Simon, Brian Zill
  - Software Design and Implementation Group:
    - John DeTreville, Ben Zorn
  - Software Improvement Group:
    - Manuel Fahndrich, James Larus, Sriram Rajamani, Jakob Rehof
- **MSR Silicon Valley**
  - Martin Abadi, Andrew Birrell, Ulfar Erlingsson, Roy Levin, Nick Murphy, Ted Wobber

“Modern” OS And Applications

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- Design parameters
  - scarce resources
  - benign environment
  - knowledgeable and trained users

"Modern" OS And Applications

- Design parameters
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World Changed

- Hardware and software industries were wildly successful
  - machines are fast
  - memory is cheap
  - computers are ubiquitous
- Malicious environment
  - ubiquitous worms, viruses, scams, attacks, …
- Few users understand computers or software

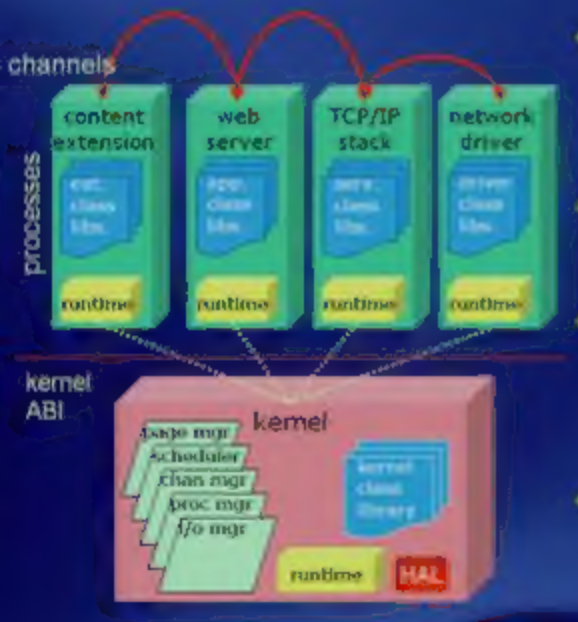
Singularity

- Goal: technology and techniques to build more dependable systems
- Dependable: predictable behavior and easily understood usage model
  - consumer satisfaction: new car vs. new PC
    - car has .99 to .999 availability (9-90 hours down time/yr)
- Research on new OS, languages, and tools
  - attack problem from multiple directions
  - working research prototype (not Windows replacement)
- No magic bullet
  - mutually reinforcing improvements to languages and compilers, systems, and tools

Key Approaches

1. Pervasive use of safe (& analyzable) programming languages
   - type safety and memory safety
   - including device drivers, OS components, applications
2. Improve system resilience despite software errors
   - failure boundaries between components
   - improve extension model
   - explicit error notification
3. Increased verification
   - specification at multiple levels of abstraction
   - closed environments with explicit cross-domain interfaces
   - design for verifiability

Singularity OS



- Closed Kernel
  - 95% written in C#
    - 17% of files contain unsafe C#
    - 5% of files contain x86 or C++
  - OS services & drivers in processes
  - kernel closed at boot time
- Software isolated processes (SIPs)
  - all user code is verified safe
  - some unsafe code in trusted runtime
  - processes closed at start time
- Safe and efficient communication via strong interfaces
  - channels between processes
  - channel behavior is specified & checked
  - checked behavior enables efficient communication
- Type safety is crux of verification and protection

Challenge 1: Pervasive Safe Languages

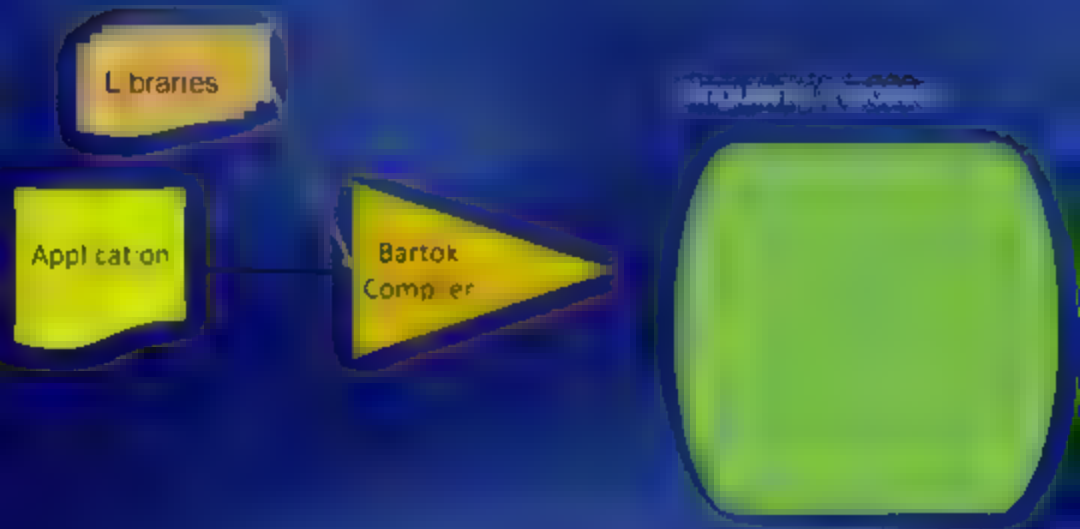
- Singularity is written in extended C#
  - actually Spec#
    (C# + pre/post-conditions and invariants)
- Added features for systems programming
  - increase programmer control over allocation, initialization, and memory layout
- Language design to support programming and verification
  - message passing
  - factoring libraries into composable pieces
  - compile-time reflection

What About The Runtime?

- JVM & CLR's design not always appropriate
  - rich runtime "one size fits all"
    - monolithic, general-purpose environment
    - large memory footprints (~4 MB process for CLR)
    - many dependencies (CLR PAL requires >300 Win32 APIs)
  - JIT compilation
    - increases runtime size and complexity
    - unpredictable performance
  - replicate OS functionality
    - security, threading, configuration, etc.
    - more is less

Singularity Runtime

Singularity Runtime



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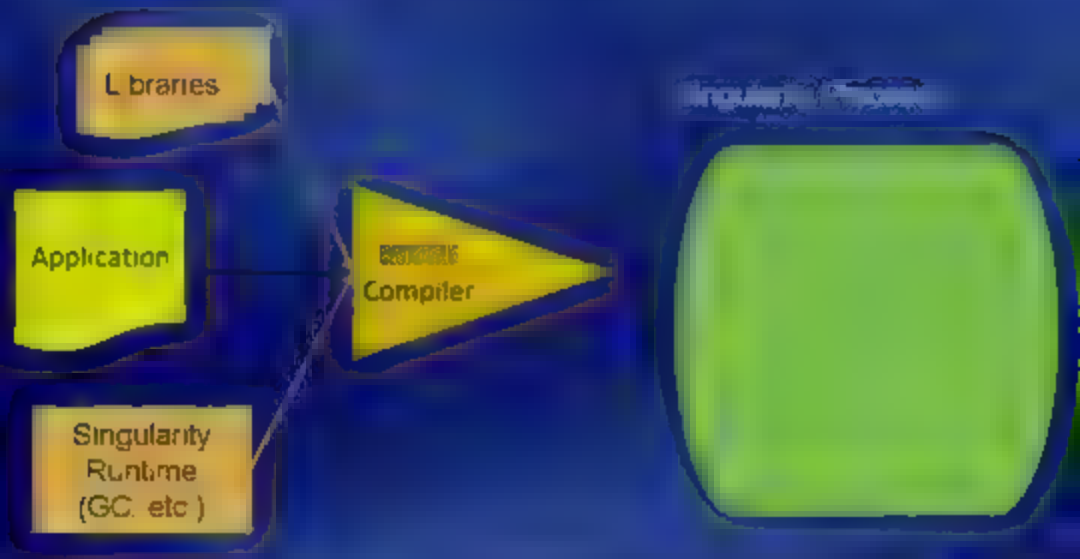

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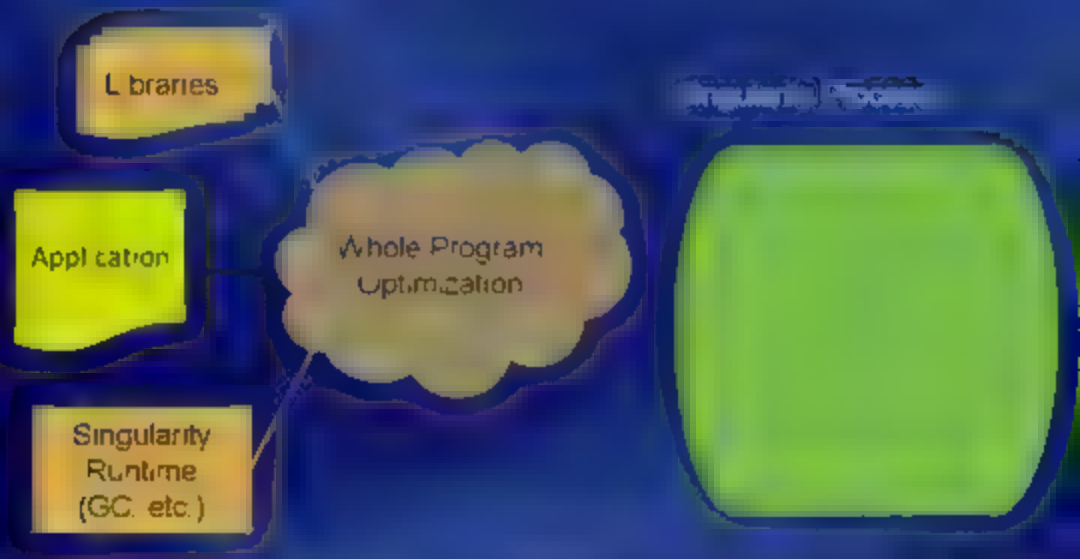

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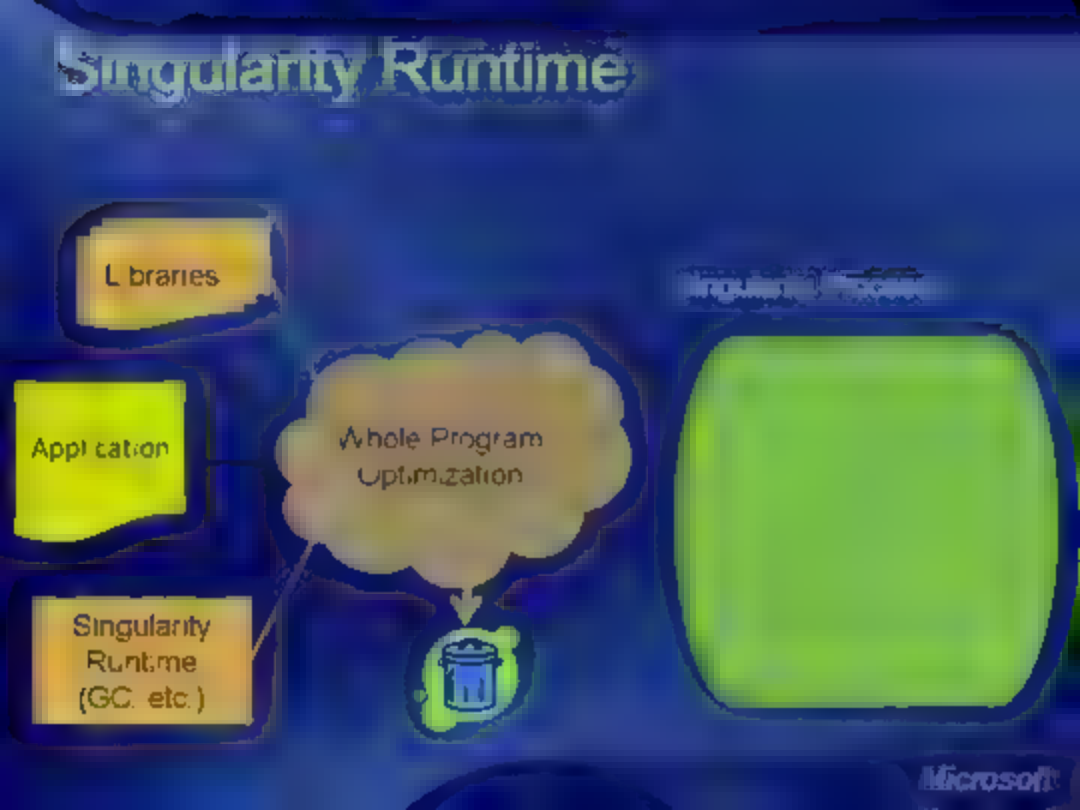

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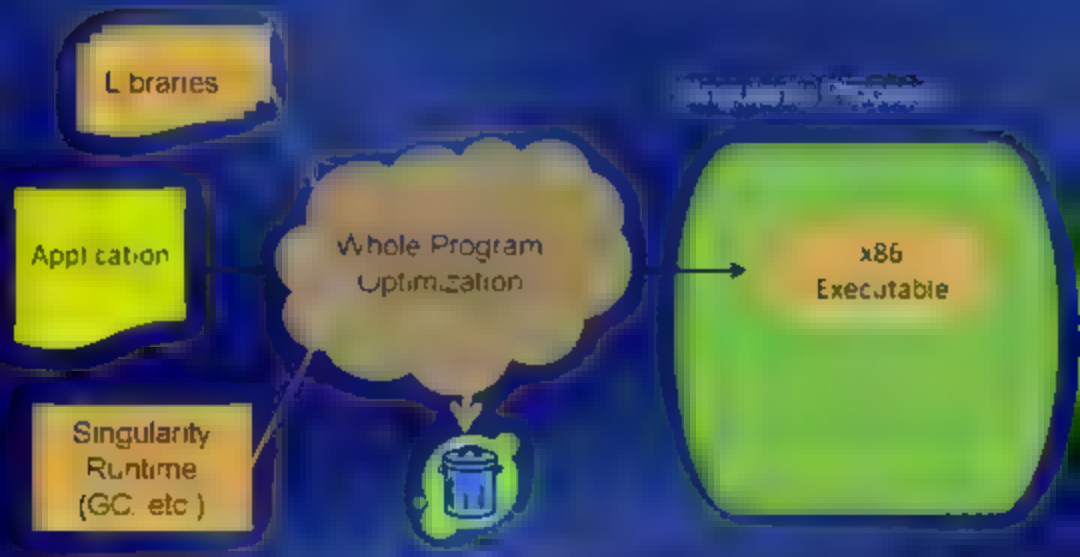

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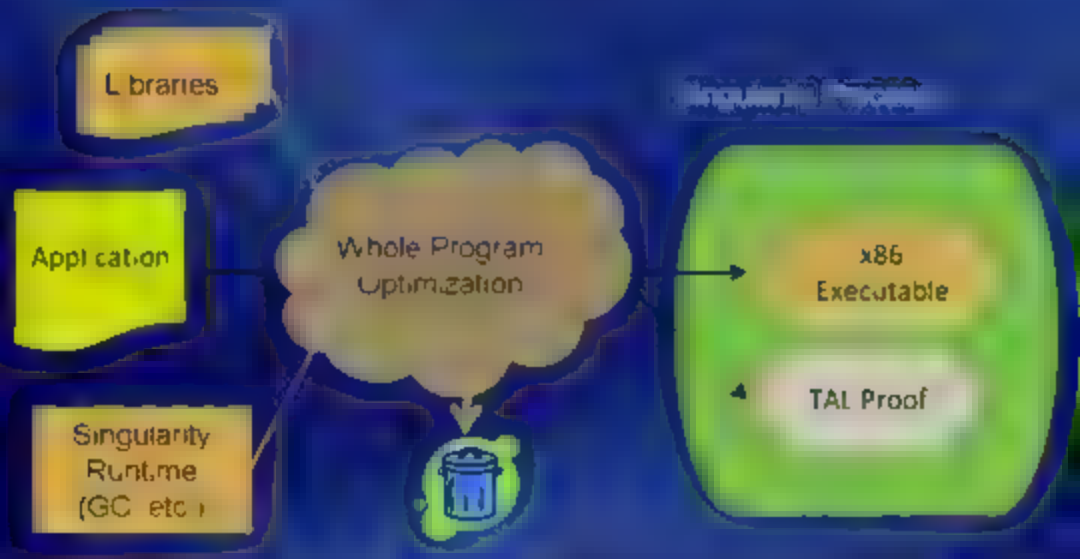
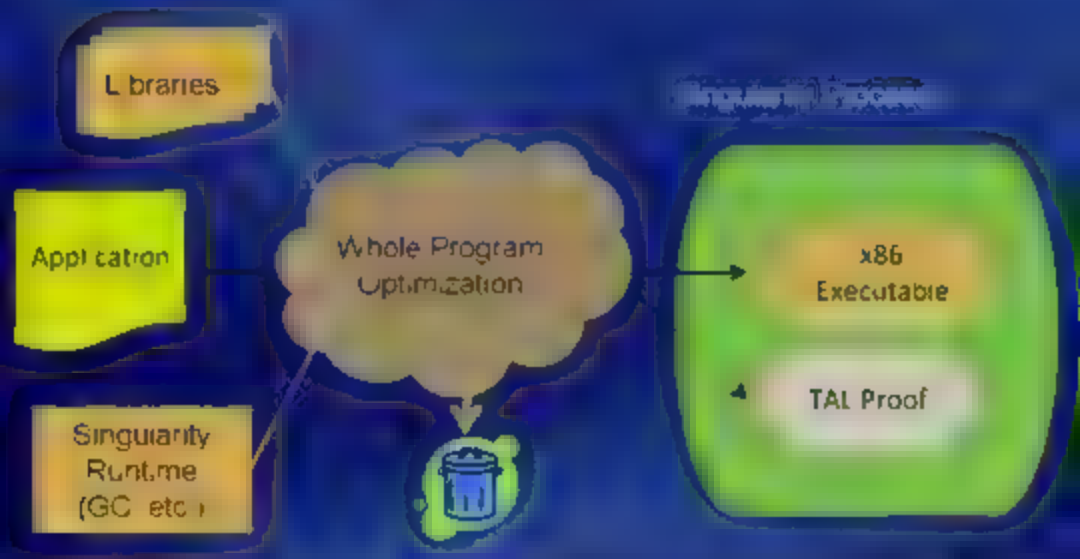


Small Customizable Runtime

- Small application environment
  - Hand-optimized global optimizing compiler (MSR Barton-Nackman)
  - Specialized runtime and libraries
  - Ultimate code for [illegible] language features
  - Application-level code
- Customizable [illegible]
- Runtime, garbage collector, and libraries selectable on per process basis
  - reduce memory and computation overhead
  - enforce design discipline and system policies per process
- Eliminate OS functionality from runtime
  - security, resource allocation, etc.
- Provide OS mechanism for enforcing system policy
  - runtime can constrain behavior of [illegible]

Singularity Runtime



Runtime Overhead

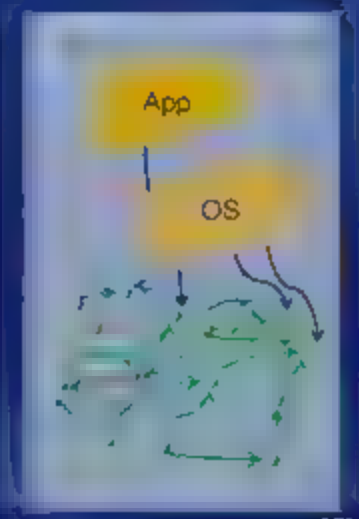
	Singularity	FreeBSD 5.3	Linux 2.6.11 (Red Hat FC4)	Windows XP (SP2)
		Memory footprint "Hello World" process		
C – static link		332K	864K	344K
C++/– static link		784K	1,216K	572K
C# – w/ GC	408K*			3,750K

- C# process w/ GC has similar memory footprint as C++ minimal process (no GC or exceptions) (~400K)

Run-Time Resilience

- Software errors should not cause system failure
- Resilient system architecture
  - isolate system components to prevent data corruption
  - provide clear failure notification
  - implement policy for restarting failed component

Process Architectures



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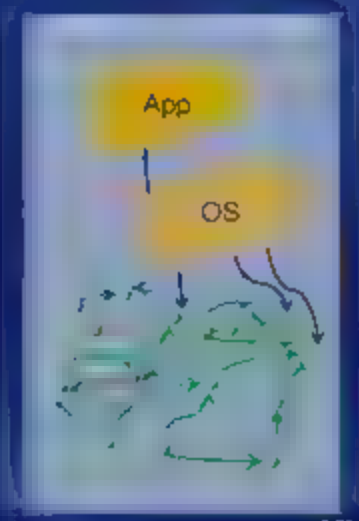

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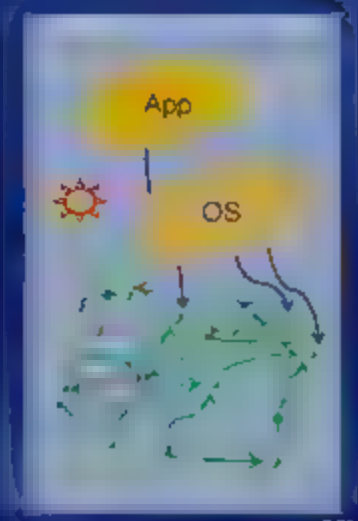
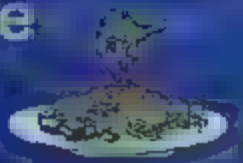


Process Architectures

Open Process Architecture

- Open processes
  - dynamic code loading and runtime code generation
  - [illegible] kernel, etc.
  - cross-process memory sharing
  - system API allows one process to alter state of another
- Near ubiquitous (Windows, Unix, etc.)
  - originated in Multics
- Shared state reduces dependability
  - 85% of Windows crashes are caused by third party code in kernel
  - interfaces between extension and host are often poorly documented and understood
  - no isolation boundary between host and extension
  - extension can access non-public interfaces (reflection)

Single Process Architecture



- All code and data in single address space
  - rely on language and memory safety to isolate components
  - dynamic code loading and runtime code generation
  - easy data sharing
- Xerox PARC (Cedar, Smalltalk, etc.) and Lisp Machine model
  - Java and .NET model as well
- Runtime is single point of failure
  - shared runtime must also meet all applications' requirements
- Rely on garbage collection to reclaim resources
  - finalizers
- Difficult to construct extensible systems

AppDomains Are Still Interdependent

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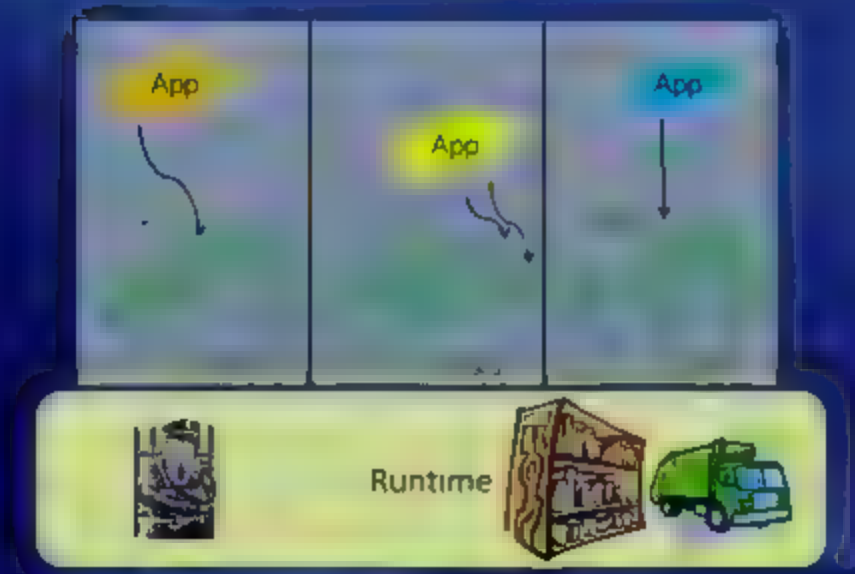
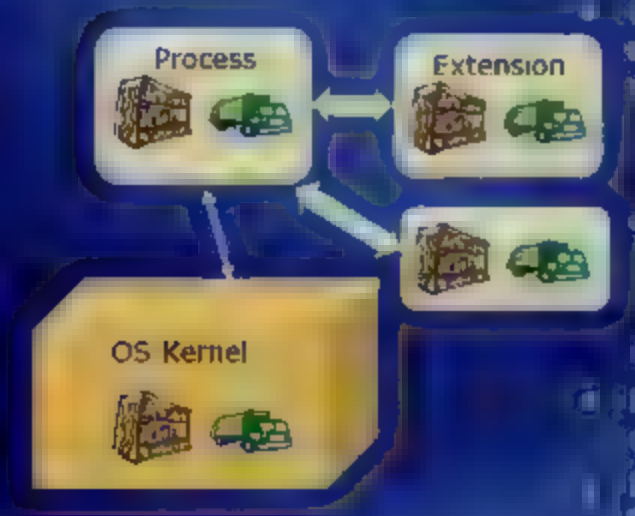


Singularity Sealed Processes



- Singularity processes are sealed
  - no dynamic code loading
  - no run-time code generation
  - all code present when process starts execution
- Extensions execute in separate processes
  - separate closed environments with well-defined interfaces
- no shared memory
- Process is fundamental unit of failure isolation
- Better security, verification, failure handling, optimization

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Static Benefit Of Sealed Processes

Program	Whole Code	Reachable Code	% Reduction
Kernel	3.37 MB	1.29 MB	46%
IDE Disk Driver	1.38 MB	455 KB	67%
Web Server	1.73 MB	765 KB	72%
Content Extension	2.14 MB	502 KB	77%

- Reduces process code size by up to 75%
- Fewer code paths ⇒ better optimization & error analysis

Need For Lightweight Processes

- Existing processes rely on expensive hardware virtual memory and protection mechanisms
  - VM prevents reference to other processes' pages
  - protection prevents unprivileged code from access system resources (e.g. VM page tables)
- Processes are expensive to create and schedule
  - encourages monolithic program development
  - large, undifferentiated applications
  - dynamic code loading
  - threading to allow independent control flow

Software Isolated Processes (SIPs)

- Protection and isolation enforced by language safety and kernel API design not hardware
  - Kernel/user mode transitions
  - All other processes execute within own hardware address space
  - Language safety ensures process can't access or modify memory in other processes
- Global invariants:
  - no process contains a pointer to another process's object space
  - no pointers from exchange heap into process

Interprocess Communications

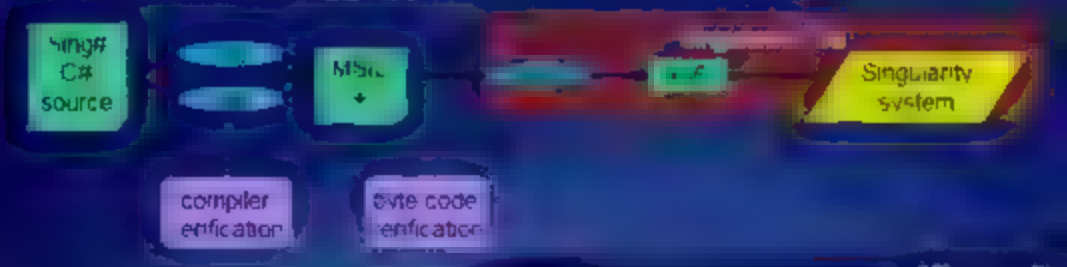
- Channels are strongly typed (value and behavior)
  - bidirectional communications ports
  - [illegible] language support
- Messages live outside processes, in exchange heap
  - [illegible]
- "Mailbox" semantics enforced by linear types

Failure Isolation

- SIPs are failure containers
  - no shared implementation or state across SIPs
  - process runtimes are distinct
- On SIP failure
  - clean failure notification on peer channel endpoints
  - resources reclaimed by OS
- Recovery feasible, not automatic or transparent
  - peers can recover and continue

Your System Is A Type System

- Process integrity depends on type and memory safety
  - currently trust compiler and runtime
- TAL can eliminate compiler from trusted computing base
- Working on verifying the GC as well



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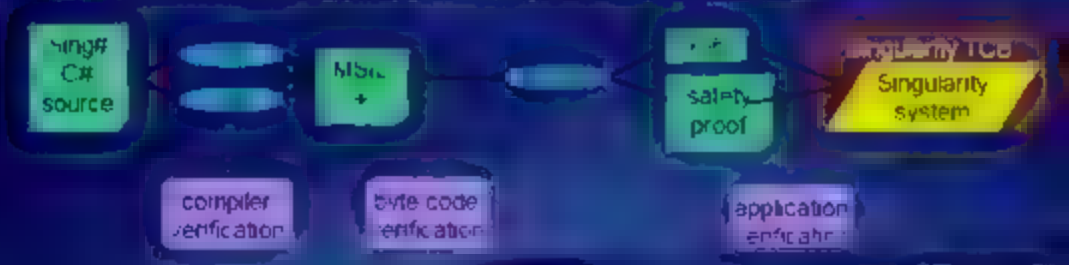
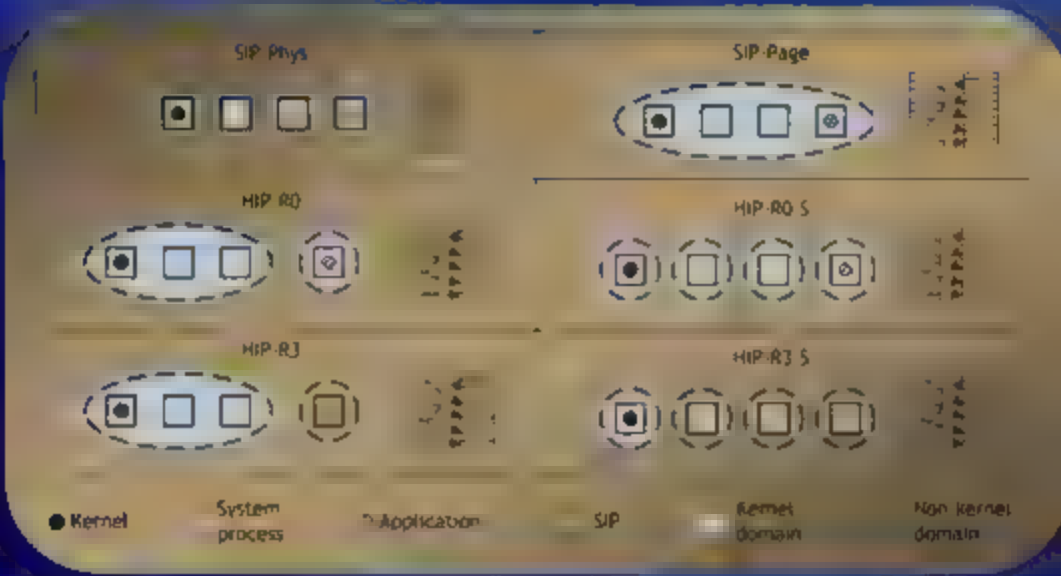
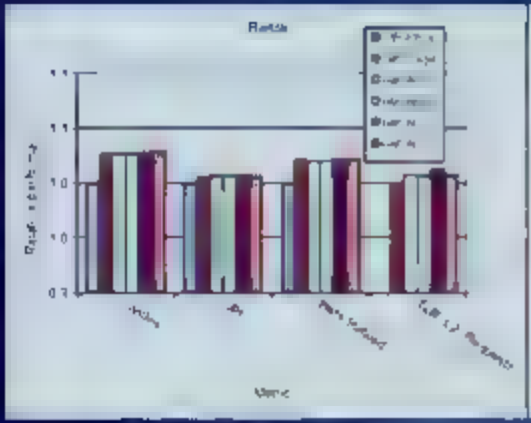
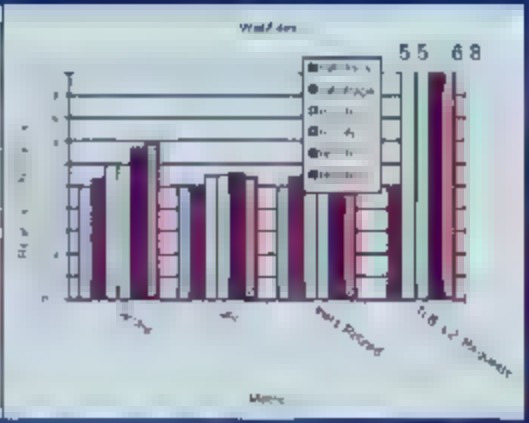


Hardware Protection Is Orthogonal



Hardware And Software Isolation





Micro Benchmarks

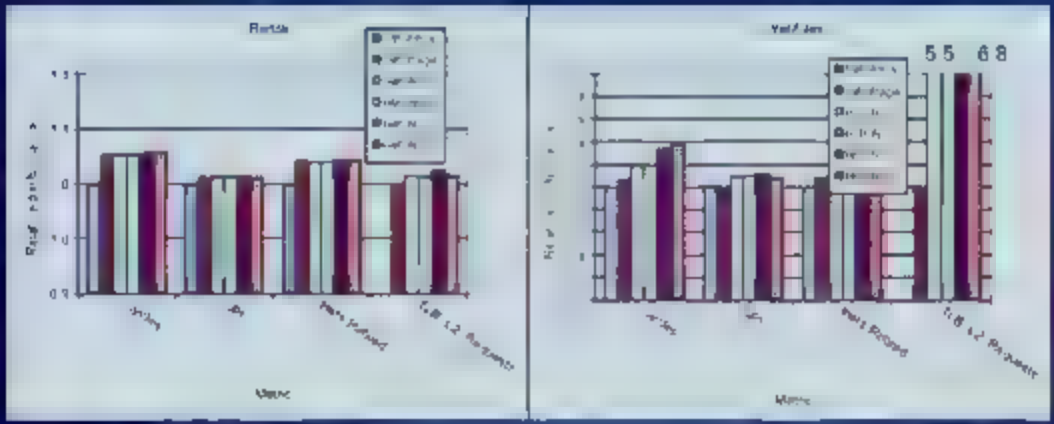
	Singularity
Minimum API call	80
Message request/reply	1,041
Process create & start	388,000

- Why?
  - all SIPs run in ring 0
  - static verification replaces hardware protection
  - good optimizing compiler not [illegible]

More Verification

- Integrate specifications throughout system
  - language
  - interprocess communication
  - system configuration
- Detect errors early, identify code late
  - language safety essential to system integrity

Hardware And Software Isolation



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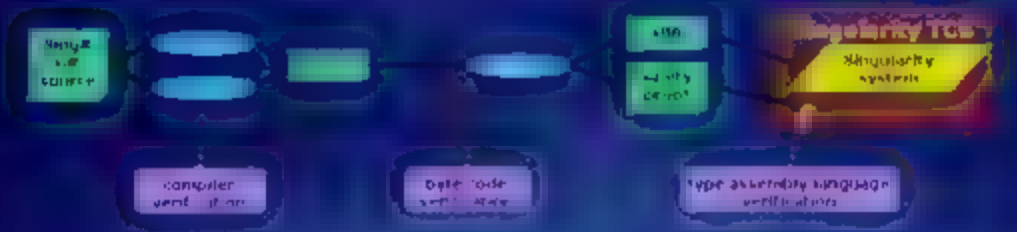
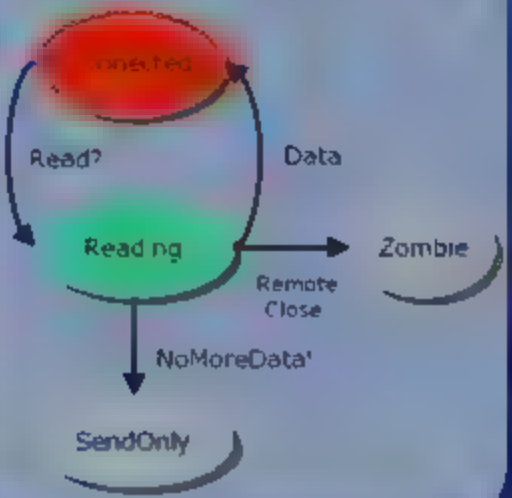


Example

Channel Contracts

```
TcpSocketContract
```

? = receive
= send



Channel Contracts

Contract

```
conn.SendRead()
    conn.Data(readData)
        dataBuffer.Add(readData),
            true,
    conn.RemoteClose()
        false,
}
```

Channel Contracts

```
state Connected : one {
    Read? -> ReadResult
    Write? -> WriteResult

    GetLocalAddress? -> IPAddress! ->
      Connected,
    GetLocalPort? -> Port! -> Connected,

    DoneSending? -> ReceiveOnly,
    DoneReceiving? -> SendOnly,
    Close? -> Closed,
    Abort? -> Closed;
}

state Reading : one {
    Data! -> Connected;
    NoMoreData! -> SendOnly
    RemoteClose! -> Zombie
}
```

```
conn.SendRead();
...
    case conn.Data(readData)
      dataBuffer.Add(0) (readData),
      ... true,

    case conn.RemoteClose() :
      return false,
}
```

Missing Case

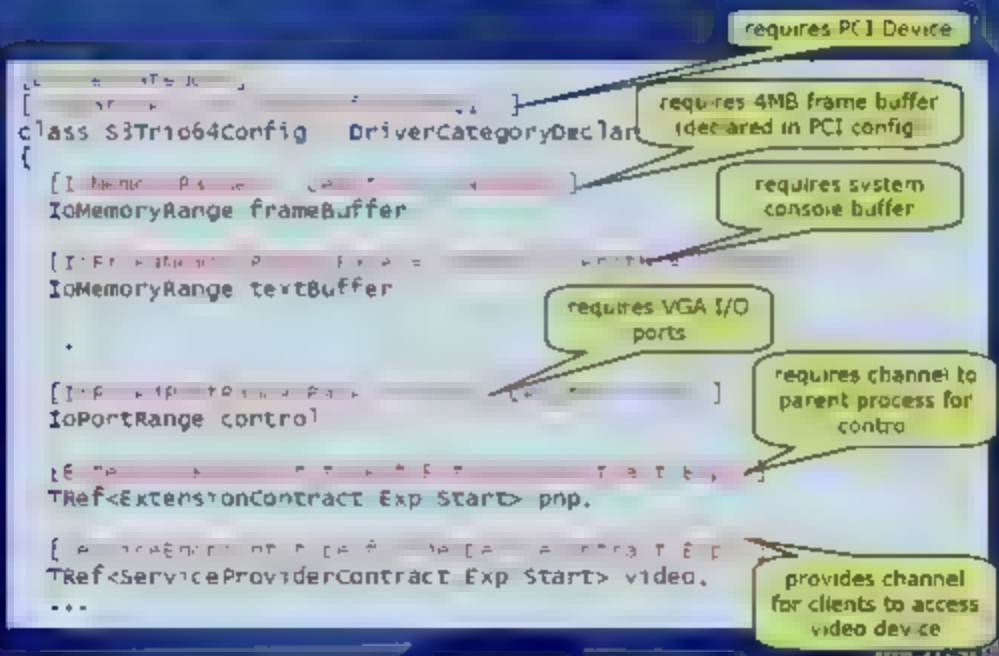
```
case conn.NoMoreData
```

Contract conformance statically detects subtle errors such as deadlock

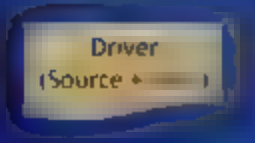
Applications Specifications

- Application is first-class abstraction with identity
  - code + resources + manifest
- Manifest specifies
  - software components
  - dependencies
  - exported channels
  - hardware or software resource requirements

Device Driver Specification



Specification Used In Many Ways



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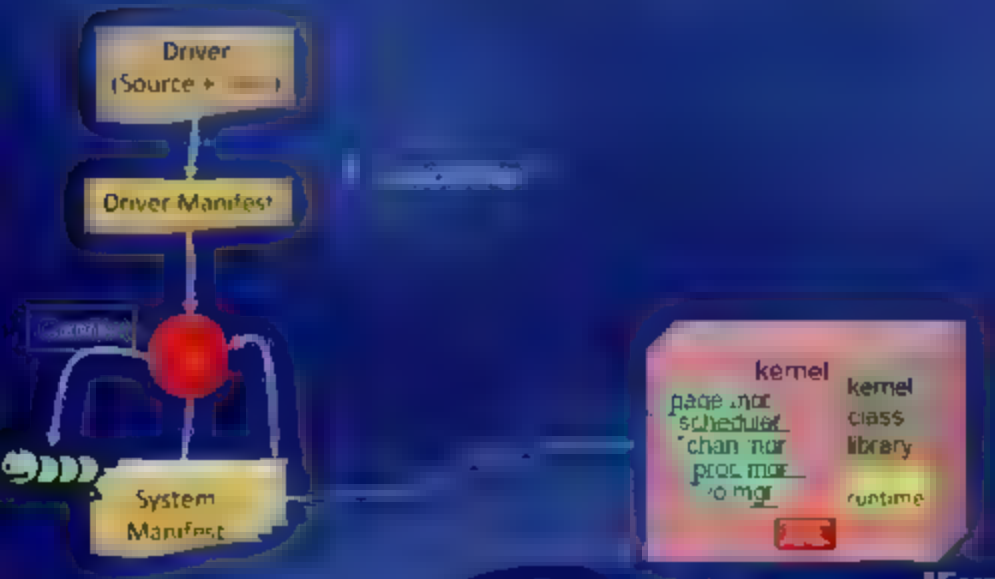

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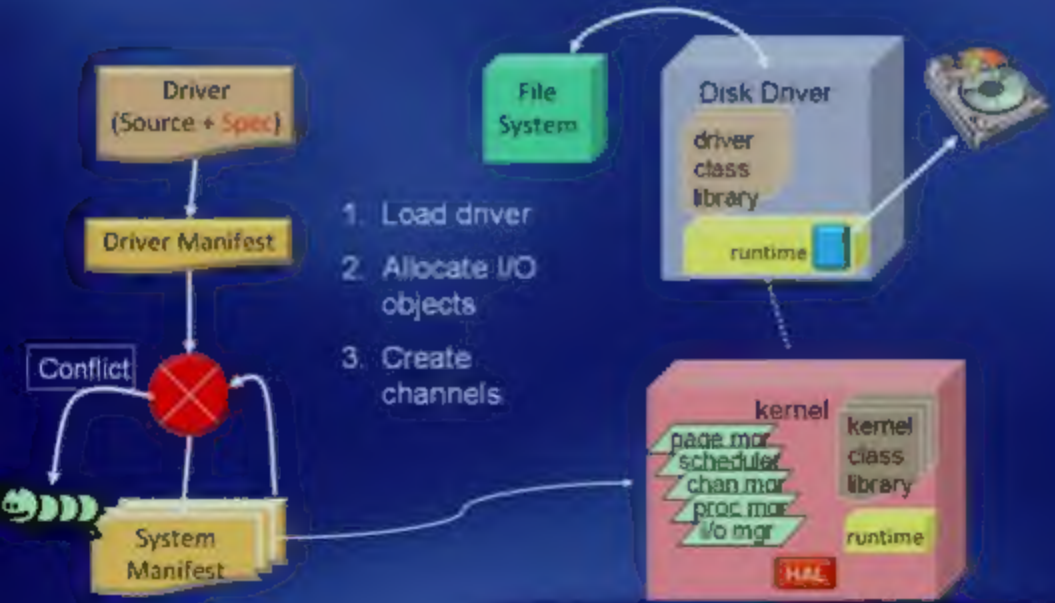

Verification Of System Configuration

- Verification ensures
  - never install an program that will break another program
  - never start a program without appropriate resources
  - never grant a program access to undeclared resources
- All of these checks performed statically

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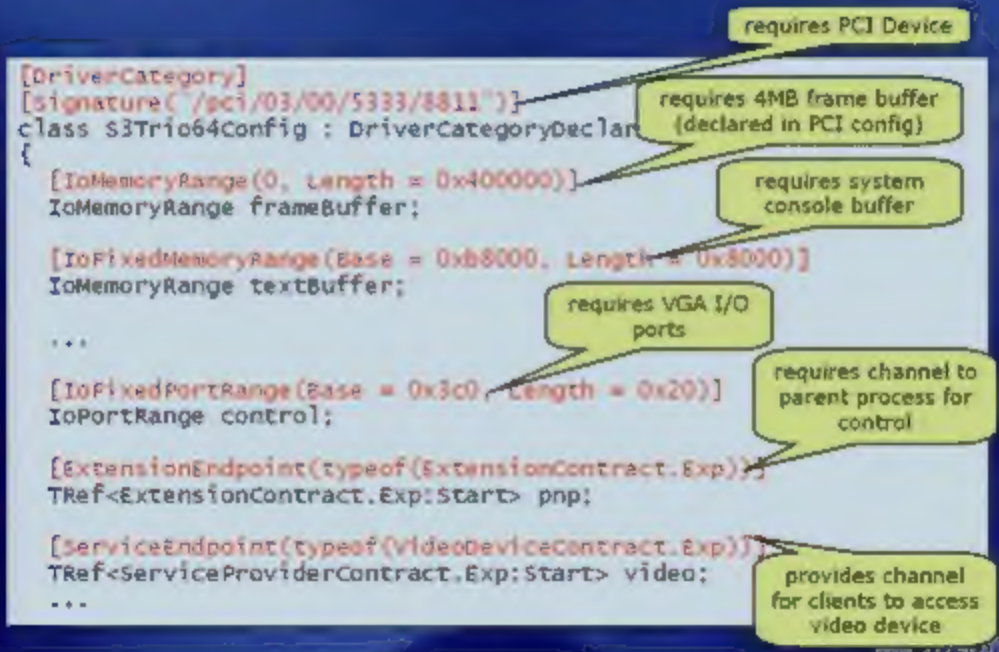

Summary

- Singularity is basis for more dependable systems
  - pervasive use of safe programming languages
  - lightweight, closed, customizable run-time environment
  - verifiable specification of system behavior
- Working research prototype
  - driving research in large number of areas
- More information:
  - http://research.microsoft.com/os/singularity
  - Growing number of TRs & papers